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THE DUBLIN LITERARY GAZETTE,

OR

WEEKLY CHRONICLE OF CRITICISM, BELLES LETTRES, AND FINE ARTS.

No. 17.

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HIGH WAYS AND BYE-WAYS IN IRELAND.

BY AN ANTIQUARY.

Most Venerable and awful President !

WHEN I witnessed the sudden results of the introduction of your Literary Gazette, and the change it effected in the minds of a people long innocent of literature ; when I saw that it was established as a circulating medium, where such paper currency was never before admissible, and felt sensibly that it was transmuting learning and taste through the sapless and exhausted channels of the land ; when I contemplated you,

" Most potent, grave, and Reverend Signior," directing all the magic of its influence, and by its agency careering through every town of the Pale ; surmounting the barriers that were hitherto considered the terminators of light and darkness, and walking abroad in your peculiar majesty through districts, where (with great respect,) the king's writ never ran, and even newspapers came

" Like angel visits, few and far between." When, Sire ! I became conscious of all these moral miracles, I could not but look upon you as something superhuman ; and notwithstanding the evidences that so proclaimed you " a spirit of health," I yet own, as I ventured a closer inspection of the " green eyed" sanctuary in which you are said to be enshrined, I was strangely minded to conjure you in the less favourable epithets of Hamlet's alternative.

Please, however, most graciously to concede, that it was in one of the foggiest days in March, when issuing from the Dublin Library, with the intent to make Fleet-street in the direction of what is commonly called an hypotenuse, I was so powerfully diverged, or rather refracted, by the density of the atmosphere, that I actually found myself for the first time in the vestibule of your temple, even in the porch of the forbidden chamber.

Never can I forget my sensations at that moment. On the one side appeared a range of ponderous folios, which I concluded contained the arcana of your necromancy ; on the other, extended a redoubt close set with the artillery of your warfare ; but, Oh ! more formidable far,—before me was the door, the screen—the ominous portal, over which appeared to flit a legion of orphan Cupids, and other bare-backed divinities, while through its central pannel peered the Polyphemus eye, that like Campbell's Andes

" Looks from his throne of clouds o'er half the world."

My glance was sudden and tremulous. I inhaled a fearful estimate of your powers. I imagined you a child of the mist—a veiled Prop—but pardon me, as Mrs. Malaprop says, caparisons are odorous, and I am determined to trespass no farther on your patience, lest in your most immitigable rage

" You rend an oak
And peg me in its knotty entrails, till
I have howled away twelve winters."

Enough to know I hurried from the presence with a precipitance that made me wholly unmindful of my original destination, I ascended the HIGHWAYS of the city, my spirits returned, and at length on the summit level I acknowledged the genial salubrity of St. George's parish.

Some tourist of sixty years since has remarked, or if not I remark it now, that Summer Hill is the Clifton of Dublin, and certes if the salubrity of its air falls any thing short in the comparison, the enchantment of its southern prospect more than averages the advantages. When I reached it on the day in question, it was most selfishly grateful to look back upon the mist that enveloped the " basse ville," but would not extend beyond the jurisdiction of the Recorder. I hurried to my apartment, which being on the house-top, I have suitably fitted up with Attic elegance. I looked abroad, and, Oh ! what a prospect met my eager eyes ! I have glanced over it a hundred times, but never did it seem so glorious as on that day. The fog that hung only over the city, rather gave a witchery to the effect, as domes and spires, steeples and masts, shot in strange contiguity from its bosom. Nelson himself—the naval styliste, as you have somewhere facetiously styled him—seemed rising from the sea, Like Neptune—Venus—Or Nicodemus !

And in the pride of his honours overlooking the seeming element that waved and rolled innocuous at his feet. For some time I amused myself identifying every prominent structure, and marshalling around it such associations as my memory could supply. It was an architectural anatomy that to me had some interest, but to others, might be dull in the detail. I therefore willingly withdraw your attention to the pure unclouded scenery which environed that interesting nucleus.

A range of mountains in the back ground, progressively elevated the eye and thoughts to the enchantments of Wicklow. The remarkable eminence aptly termed Sugar-loaf—the serrated back of Bray-head—the three topped promontory of Killiney—were distinctly mapped before me ; while farther to the left, as it appeared from my station, shone the spangling villas of Kingstown, enclosing its fair harbour, and beyond all, the bay, basking in the clear sunshine, and animated with sailships and steamers. For the privilege of this scenic enjoyment, which the opposite line of houses cannot claim, the south side of Summer-hill is subjected to city taxation. I know not whether the new valuator have been as romantically inclined in the items of their appraisement.

There was but one irremediable barrier to the perfection of the Panorama, and that was, a range of houses by which some avaricious

builder, in a spirit of truly Gothic architecture, has extended Buckingham-street, and so excluded me from even a view of Clontarf and Howth, and all that classic country. I was not, however, to be thus repulsed. I flew like a sparrow to the house-top, and at the risk of being hereafter slated as an intruder on the mysteries of the plumber, or the builder, or mayhap the sweep, to which castes such exalted situations are in this country exclusively assigned, I did, like a true orientalist, but with not such good accommodation, seat myself on the tiles, and despite the aforesaid builder, at once, as by a paramount title, command that glorious tract of country (which was before shut out) redolent as it is with classic recollections and indescribable emotions.

It was then that I thought of you once more, and you will perceive with kindlier feelings. I wished you could become the medium of illustrating the events of my long neglected country, of telling us in the harmony of the heart, what she was, and might be ; of pointing out the footsteps of history over her vallies, her mountains, and her plains ; of investing her ruins with the moral charm of ever-green traditions ; and of projecting her ancient families in all those lights of historic glory, that should be the only boast of long traceable descent. Theft, indeed, might the Irishman find in his own land those deeply interesting scenes, that would more intellectually attach him to his country ; then might he look to the revolutions of her destinies for the most extraordinary natural vicissitudes, and boldest individual achievements that the annals of any country can supply ; then might he stand amid the self-darkened remains of antiquity, and catch inspiration as from the living stone !

I am resolved, I cried—I will be the pioneer of the enterprise—I will be the first interpreter of antiquity to the seven millions, I will—I am ashamed to write all I thought I would accomplish ; my anticipations were as rapid and as flattering as those of the Persian glassman. I was not satisfied at the elevated station I had attained, looking down over a subject city : I felt nothing in my specific gravity to prevent my soaring even higher. I rose in the empyrean, I mingled with the stars, (I had however some good and sufficient reasons for avoiding the moon :) I did in verity spring from my position, and that first motion had well nigh been my last. In the impulse of my patriotism, or self-conceit, call it ad libitum, I was nearly precipitated over the terrace, and most indubitably left prostrate in the gutter, " fallen from my high estate !" I raised myself, however, with a sense of my gravitation from this ignoble position, and with more chastened notions resolved in that very hour to commence my PROGRESSES.

To use an Irish phrase, I began at the face of the ancient district yclept Fingal—and is there not in that very sound something that

knocks at your heart, associated as it is with all these beautiful impositions of Macpherson? I could also, with the spirit of an antiquary look back into its olden history. I distinctly remembered that it was once the demesne of the Danes of Dublin, and that even at this day, its inhabitants are thought to be distinguishable by a peculiarity of dialect, derived perhaps from that connexion. I repeated to myself, or rather to my hobby, (for here I mounted) that in 972 this tract was devastated by the most illustrious of the O'Melaghlin's, and that in 1013 it was again subjected to the visitation of the same warlike chieftain, till Sitric and his "Royal Danes" sorely avenged the invasion. I enumerated to myself the "divers robberies and combustions" which in the feeble reign of the Second Richard, the noted Mac Geddy perpetrated in this territory. I recalled the singular circumstances which led to his detection, and, as if I had lineally transmigrated from his period without the interposition of a Lethe, I still thought I beheld him hanging in death from the walls of king John's castle, within the historic ambit of Trim.

My reminiscences accompanied me to Clarkebridge, a point of view that cannot be uninteresting to those who have not the liberty of my roof. The intervening space between this and Ballybough-bridge, is known by the homely epithet of "Mud Island." I am aware that many antiquaries of high respectability, whom I shall not here name, dissent widely from me as to the derivation of this epithet; doubtless the subject was well worthy of their deepest lore, and in their grovelling theories they will have it that the cognomen is deducible from the marshy fields and slimy rivulets of this "holy land." Relying, however, on the venerable M. S. whose authority is upheld by immemorial tradition, and which commences with the golden precept in richly illuminated capitals,

*In Muderis,
In Claynoneis,*

I give it as my settled dictum, and I trust that will set the question at rest for ever, that Mud Island was so called, because the principal structures that graced its surface, were of the class designated in some Irish Melody as the "cotter's mud edifice." I am the more anxious to put this opinion upon record, as these hovels are now fast disappearing, while the name is likely "to cling round it verdantly still."

BALLYBOUGH.

The tourist will find a manufactory of vitriol at Ballybough;—the historian will remember that its chapel originally belonged to the regular Canons of Glendaloch, whose prior had its advowson;—while the churchman will not fail to discover that its tithes were "part and parcel of the possessions of the monastery of the Virgin by Dublin." The Jew approaches its village with feelings of a more sombre character—for in its centre is, perhaps, the only Irish cemetery of his nation. I here bethought me of the devotion with which the Jews are represented in the sacred writings, as regarding their burial places; and the last wish of that affection expressed with such pathetic simplicity, in the entreaty of Jacob, particularly occurred to me: "Bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt; but I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying place." And afterwards he charges his sons: "bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before

Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite, for a possession of a burying place. There they buried Abraham, and Sarah, his wife; there they buried Isaac, and Rebecca, his wife; and there I buried Leah." The tomb-stones of this grave yard, at Ballybough, however, not being hallowed by any christian respect, have been, as I understand, frequently carried away, to supply hearths and chimney slabs to the neighbourhood: and in Cromwell's (not Oliver's) "Excursions through Ireland," a humorous anecdote is related of a Jew, who, visiting a christian friend in the *ways* of Ballybough, found him in the act of repairing his house, when, on examining the improvements, he perceived at the fire-place a stone, which intimated to the astonished Israelite that the body of his father was buried in the chimney!! The ground has been since enclosed with a high wall, and is, I am informed, planted with trees and shrubs, among which are a few tombstones with Hebrew inscriptions. I could not, however, obtain admission then, nor since, although I actually bought two pounds of chocolate from one, and a gross of pencils from the only other Jewish patriarch that our metropolis can boast, in the hope of bending to my purpose that stiff-necked generation.

Though Ballybough sounds not quite so tunable as lark to shepherd's ear, yet are there some records associated with it which would, perhaps, be worthy of rescuing from oblivion. One particularly is referred to—A.D. 1510, when John Netterville and John Penquett having perpetrated a murder, and stolen from William Dardis, the Vicar of Ardeath, a sheep, of the value of eight pence, and committed other enormities, that shewed they were not born in times

"When Erin's sons were so good or so cold
As not to be tempted by woman or gold,"
sought sanctuary in St. Mary's Abbey; whereupon the Coroner appointed the Officers of Ballybough to take charge of the said felons, till delivered by due course of law. The Abbot Richard Begg, and his monks, sturdily resisted this interference with their privileges; and on the other hand, the officers of Ballybough, deeming their opponents 'priests while they prayed, but foemen when they fought,' laboured the ecclesiastics, till overpowered, as it were, *de jure divino*, they appealed to the common law, indicted the churchmen, and were again more peaceably discomfited by a verdict of acquittal.

In subsequent times the ancient, but long since extinct, family of the Bathes of Drumcondra, were seized in fee of Ballybough, but, under the Act of Settlement, the greater part thereof was granted to James, Duke of York, of which Alderman John Eccles, of Dublin, afterwards obtained a conveyance from the Trustees of the forfeited estates.

I will not trouble you with other matters touching this little village, which might savour too much of the "veritable antique," and feeling that I have already occupied more than enough of your valuable columns, I shall, for the present, conclude with the following

NOTICE

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

The writer of this article proposes, in the course of the ensuing weeks, to visit, by easy stages, Marino, Clontarf Town, Castle and Sheds; Kilbarrack, Sutton, and so to Howth—returning by way of Belcoole, Raheny, and Killester.

En passant he will furnish some family histories, particularly of the Caulfields, Vernons, and St. Lawrences.

I offer this notice, Sir, as well that all other *hobbylers* may avoid my track, as that any person having any documents or traditions touching the same, may communicate them to me, through the intervention of your office; and I do further hereby require that the respective noblemen and gentlemen, whose territories I encounter in my course, may be prepared to exhibit all their *lions* to advantage, and most especially to unroll their individual pedigrees and achievements to my inquiring eyes. To my Lord of Howth, *par excellence*, you will, I trust, forward a copy of this your Number, that he may thenceforth receive, through your successive publications, due intimation of my approach.

To each and all I would give the poet's warning—

"A chiel's amang ye takin' notes,
An' faith he'll print it."

D.

Summer-Hill

REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

Gertrude; a Tale of the Sixteenth Century. 2 Vols. post 8vo.—London: Colburn and Bentley.

These volumes, which are evidently the production of a lady, are written in a light, sparkling, agreeable style, which carries one on unwearied to the end. They are intended to depict some of the youthful follies and darker shades in the character of the somewhat overpraised *Henri Quatre*, and to present a vivid picture of the then state of manners at the Court of France. The narrative commences with a minute description of the wedding of Henry, then king of Navarre, and Protestant, with the beautiful Marguerite de Valois, daughter of Catherine de Medis. Though Charles the Ninth was nominally the reigning monarch, Catherine, the bigoted queen-mother, who had been declared Regent of France during the minority of her son, still possessed no inconsiderable authority, which indeed she continued to exercise in a yet more sovereign manner, during the reign of Henry III. Four days after the splendid nuptial ceremony, described in the opening of the first volume of Gertrude, the massacre of St. Bartholomew's day was perpetrated, namely, on the 24th of August, 1572. The heroine of the story, was the youngest daughter of Guy, Count of Frontenay, who having embraced the reformed doctrines, had kept aloof from court, and brought up his family in solitude, at some distance from Paris. His elder daughters were already married to Hungarian noblemen of the Huguenot persuasion. Gertrude, the only one remaining, was but in her fourteenth year: we shall introduce her, however, in the words of the author:—

"Brightly arose the sun on the twenty-fourth of August, and almost as brightly sparkled the eyes which its beams awoke that day. The morning breezes played amongst the leaves of the forest trees. Rosy clouds, tinged with gold, spread themselves over the eastern horizon; the birds, in thrilling chorus, assembled to salute the god of day; the tops of the distant hills were bathed with radiant light; hundreds of peasants, with happy faces and holiday garbs, were assembled by day-break on the spacious